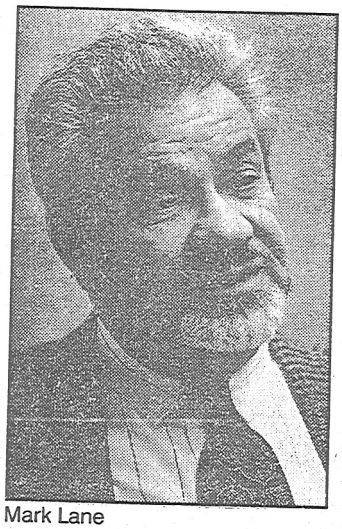

Mark Lane

Lane hits CIA with 'Denial'

By Bob Hoover
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Did you know Jack Ruby worked for Richard Nixon in 1947? Mark Lane does and he has a government document to prove it.

Lane shows the document with a sense of fresh incredulity, a youthful enthusiasm which belies the fact that he's been pulling out these arcane surprises about the John F. Kennedy assassination since 1964. That year, the New York lawyer who had worked in the Kennedy presidential campaign, began his career as a vociferous critic of the Warren Commission.

His 1966 best seller, "Rush to Judgment," was one of the first mainstream publications challenging the findings of the presidential panel which accused Lee Harvey Oswald of being the sole assassin of J.F.K.

"The FBI went to every major publisher and told them not to do 'Rush to Judgment,' " Lane said here yesterday. "Finally, one did [Holt, Reinhart and Winston]. I received death threats as well."

Lane's latest book on the assassination, "Plausible Denial," met a similiar fate with major publishers. The small Thunder's Mouth Press agreed to do the book, offering Lane "the worst book contract I ever signed. I told my wife, 'I don't care. I don't care if they only print 5,000 copies. As long as it's published.' Well, it's now in its eighth printing. The first printing of 45,000 copies was sold out before there was any advertising or reviews of the book."

"Plausible Denial" was No. 3 on the Publisher's Weekly best-seller list last week and No. 5 on The New York Times list. However, the newspaper has declined to review the book, Lane said, because "they say there's nothing new in it." Lane said.

Lane's contention in his new book is that the CIA killed Kennedy because the president had plans to abolish it in favor of a new intelligence agency headed by Robert Kennedy.

"The CIA is the most powerful organization in the world today, now that there's no KGB around. Its hierarchy always viewed presidents and its own directors as transients," said Lane, holding up the

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CIA the villain in Lane's 'Denial'

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copy of an October 1963 column by New York Times commentator Arthur Krock, a long-time friend of the Kennedy family. In the column, Krock wrote there was a "war" on between the CIA and the White House over policy decisions. "Krock writes this column in October and the next month, the president is shot dead. Now, do you think there's some coincidence there?"

E. Howard Hunt is one of Lane's links in the chain to the CIA. Hunt first surfaced in 1972 as one of the Watergate burglars. A longtime member of "the agency," Hunt was active in Latin American activities including the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

When Liberty Lobby, a minor right-wing organization, published a story placing Hunt in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963, he sued and won a $600,000 libel award. Lane argued the Liberty Lobby appeal and succeeded in overturning the award. In trying the case, he called numerous CIA agents, including former Director Richard Helms, and created enough doubt about Hunt's alibi to reverse the verdict.

"We had the forensic evidence 25 years ago to prove a conspiracy."

— Mark Lane, author of "Plausible Denial"

"We had the forensic evidence 25 years ago to prove a conspiracy," said Lane. "Now, we need to go beyond the parlor game aspect of the case and prove who did it."

Every year, J.F.K. assassination buffs hold a convention to rehash what may be the most bizarre crime of American history and Lane used to attend. "I gave the keynote speech in 1975 and said, 'That's it. All you guys want to do is argue about how many angels can fit on the head of a pin. Let's move on."

However, Lane did attend the 1991 gathering in Dallas to promote his new book. A reporter told him most of convention participants claimed that it was "Rush to Judgment" which launched their interest. "I told him that made me feel like Dr. Frankenstein. That's some monster I've created."

Lane admitted his book was boosted by Oliver Stone's film, "JFK" which the author feels is "full of factual errors. I talked to them [the producers]. They wanted to use my stuff on the CIA, but they said they wanted to 'dramatize it.' I asked them, 'Why do you need to dramatize the president getting his head blown off in broad daylight on a sunny day in front of hundreds of people?' I refused to work with them, but they used my material anyway."

As an attorney, Lane has also represented James Earl Ray, convicted assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who has since recanted his confession, and written seven other books, four screenplays, a play and produced two documentaries.